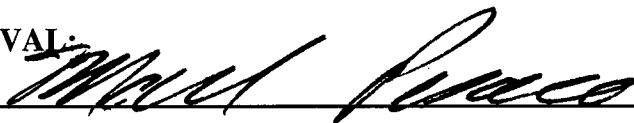


REPORT

DATE: February 13, 2003
TO: Energy and Environment Committee
FROM: Ted Harris, Associate Regional Planner, 213-236-1916, harrist@scag.ca.gov
SUBJECT: Release of the Final RTP PEIR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:



RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve the release of the Final Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and recommend that the Regional Council (RC) certify the final RTP PEIR and adopt the Findings, Statement of Overriding Considerations, and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

SUMMARY:

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that the Regional Council certify the Final PEIR and adopt the Findings, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), and a Statement of Overriding Considerations (SOCs) before the RC approves the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Furthermore, CEQA requires that SCAG send responses to commenters at least 10 days before the RC certifies the PEIR and approves the RTP. Thus, the Final RTP PEIR (Response to Comments) must be mailed out in mid-March 2004 in order for the RC to approve the RTP on April 1, 2004.

Under separate cover, a summary of the Final RTP PEIR will be mailed to the Energy and Environment Committee before the March 4, 2004 meeting. This summary will focus on substantial comments, responses, and changes to the Draft PEIR.

PEIR Schedule

February 9, 2004	Public comments for RTP and PEIR closed
March 4, 2004	EEC considers approval of release & recommends RC certify the Final PEIR
March 15, 2004	Final PEIR & MMRP/Findings/SOC mailed to commenters, EEC, and RC
April 1, 2004	RC considers certifying the final PEIR & adopting Findings/MMRP/SOC

BACKGROUND:

The final PEIR consists of 1) the Draft Program EIR, which was sent to members of the EEC and RC in December 2003, 2) comments received on the Draft PEIR, 3) a list of all commenters, 4) responses, and 5) revisions to the Draft PEIR, including clarification, amplification, and text changes in response to comments. The response to comments focuses on addressing significant environmental issues raised by commenters. Responses are good faith, well-reasoned replies that reference where each significant environmental issue has been addressed in the Draft PEIR. Appropriate comments, including useful input on programmatic mitigation measures, will be incorporated into the Final PEIR.

The Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations disclose the rationale supporting the decision to approve the RTP. The Statement of Overriding Considerations summarizes the expected benefits of implementing the RTP and explains why unavoidable, significant environmental impacts are considered acceptable, in light of specific social, economic, or other factors (such as mobility, accessibility, and safety, etc.) that justify approving the RTP.

The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) is required by CEQA to ensure that the mitigation measures included in the RTP PEIR are implemented. Implementation of mitigation will generally be carried out by implementing agencies at the project level, and documentation of compliance with mitigation policies will be provided by implementing agencies. SCAG's existing Intergovernmental Review (IGR) process will review this documentation to ensure compliance.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Development, production, and release of the Final RTP PEIR were programmed into the FY 2003/2004 OWP (WBS Element 04-020). Thus, approval of the release of Final RTP PEIR is expected to have no additional fiscal impact on SCAG.